



AARRC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 17th, 2015

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Second Floor Board Room

Board Members in Attendance: Chair Pattiy Torno, Vice Chair Carleton Collins, Stephanie Brown, Esther Cartwright, Councilman Jan Davis, Joe Ferikes, Karl Koon, George Morosani, Peter Sprague, Pam Turner, Mayor Jerry Vehaun

Board Members Absent: Commissioner Brownie Newman, Ricky Silver, Cindy Visnich Weeks

Staff in Attendance: Lucy Crown, Stephanie Monson Dahl, City Manager Gary Jackson, Joey Robison, Sasha Vrtunski

Guests: Suzanne Hackett

A quorum was established and Chair Torno called the commission to order at 4:02 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting, Vice Chair Collins seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. RETREAT RECAP

Vice Chair Collins recapped the retreat to Knoxville, TN. Members met with planners and learned about their riverfront redevelopment initiatives. Vice Chair Collins felt they did a good job in the redesign, but have not seen significant redevelopment. The group toured the south riverfront. He felt that the downtown was very disconnected from the river. A new form-based code zone is across a bridge. The river is much different than ours. The panel discussed river history and planning. Members then discussed what they learned and what they could bring back. The Commissioners learned that the recreational opportunities are very different there. They have had a vigorous public input process, and utilized public-private partnerships. Councilman Davis stated that the City of Knoxville isn't really further along than we are. Joel Burgess wrote a nice article and Mr. Davis recommended the commission send him a note. Ms. Ball is collating the post-its. Chair Torno wondered how the form-based code area felt, but it had been blocked off during the trip. In attendance were 9 commissioners, 9 staff, Councilwoman Gwen Wisler, and two reporters.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

a. Planning and Design Review Committee

Vice Chair Collins gave an update on their recent meeting. Form based code update – had a good kickoff meeting, consultant will come back in mid-July. Chair Torno encouraged attendees to attend any open studio opportunities. There will be a meeting day change, which will be discussed via email.

b. Networking Subcommittee

The committee held their monthly meeting at the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Sprague noted that they received a report and reviewed the expanded businesses by the 5x5. The subcommittee discussed the trip to Knoxville, and the Form Based Code kickoff. Mr. Ferikes and Mr. Koon both attended from this committee. One member attended Grilling on Greenways. Both events were well-attended and well-run. Mr. Sprague reviewed the recent newspaper articles on the Riverfront – retreat, and new Asheville Food

Park, Chamber article, and one on Form Based Code. Upcoming openings include: Smokey Park Supper Club, expected in four weeks; and Smoky Mountain Adventure Center expected in four to six weeks. Food Court seems busy, but unsure of opening yet. The Commissioners discussed the schedule for the form based code charrette and provided input to Sasha Vrtunski.

c. Nominating

Chair Torno stated they will be meeting soon due to four Commissioners terms coming up. Chair Torno, Ms. Brown, and Mayor Jerry Vebaun are the current subcommittee members.

3. STAFF UPDATES

a. TPDF

City Staff submitted Phase I and have been invited to submit Phase II for connector between Craven St Greenway and existing greenway, velodrome rebuild, and Beaucatcher Greenway development dollars, and pedestrian amenities and improvements to connect Amboy and the future river access point. The City is asking for \$2 million, and the AARRC can write a letter of support. City staff will submit the application, do a tour in the fall, and the announcements will be made in October. Chair Torno supports AARRC writing a letter, which is due prior to the next AARRC meeting. The fund has approximately \$4 million to give total. Ms Monson will send the final submitted application to the committee for reference. Chair Torno recommended an offer to provide a tour in their letter of support. Chair Torno will create the letter and send it out.

b. Project Sheet

Ms. Monson Dahl went over the project sheet.

c. UNC Asheville Update

Mr. Morosani met with staff and UNC Asheville to discuss connections. The City Manager's Office will have a quarterly meeting and will discuss further.

c. COA Board and Commission Staff Liaison Training and Policy

Postponed until next month's meeting.

d. NCDOT I-26 Update

Staff leadership has changed – Paul Black is no longer at the MPO, and Lyubov Zuyeva has taken his place. We will be sure to get her to a meeting.

e. Form-Based Code Update

Ms. Vrtunski encouraged members to get people to the Saturday morning open studio time, and then reviewed the rest of the schedule which was handed out. Consultants and staff will meet with legal staff, designers and developers, etc. The drop-in session on Monday night is a good time to give feedback or get caught up halfway through. Summary presentation is Wednesday night. Lunch and learns are economist (Monday) and arts and artist (Tuesday).

f. Equitable Development Strategies and Tools

There is a public meeting Thursday night at the Grant Center, and small group meeting Friday at the Edington Center. Looking for ways that we can partner in the community to support equitable development.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Grilling on Greenways Update

Ms Monson reminded the committee that every month until December they will take time each meeting to discuss riverfront greenways for their information. The AARRC is not tasked with providing input on greenways, but this gives them an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the projects.

Ms Crown provided an update on the event. Nearly 100 people attended. Six greenways were featured, each at their own table and with the consultants working on that greenway available to ask questions. We will have 9 miles of greenway (up from the current 4) once they are all complete in the next 5-6 years. Ms Monson passed out the ideal construction schedule and Ms Crown reviewed the connections on the French Broad River. Once complete, it will go from the Craven Street Bridge to Hominy Creek Park. French Broad River East will be on the Lyman Street from Amboy Road to Twelve Bones, and then turn into an off-road greenway that will go parallel to Riverside Drive. The most popular segment discussed at event was Beaucatcher Greenway, in part due to the views. The City is working on on-road greenway connectors through the end of this year and into next. Starts at Memorial Stadium where stairs lead you to sidewalk and asphalt trail. Future Overlook Park – property has been acquired, but not completed yet. Greenway Committee is taking regular field trips, and Crown will be sure that AARRC members are invited. Gary Jackson gave a brief historical perspective.

There was a brief update on what Friends of Connect Buncombe is working on. There is a collaborative beer between New Belgium and Highlands breweries whose proceeds will go to Friends of Connect Buncombe to support the East Asheville Greenway feasibility study. This is the first in a series of collaborative beers to benefit the greenways.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Design Review: Duke Energy Swannanoa Sub Station Project

Vice Chair Collins reviewed the substation project, which will double the size of the existing substation in the area. This will require retaining walls because there will be a cut in the hillside, as the addition will be several feet above the existing equipment. The design is proposing a soil nail wall with a naturalized appearance to retain existing vegetation, and a fence above. Vice Chair Collins showed photos and a site plan. The designer is working to screen the substation by heavily planting and providing additional view buffers along property line. The buffering is required by the landscaping requirement, and Vice Chair Collins felt that the buffering is adequate. They have provided a stormwater retention system. The subcommittee recommended the wall be a color that matches the surrounding vegetation in winter. Committee provided a lot of good input that has been incorporated.

Ms Monson reviewed the process. They are not meeting landscaping requirements, so they will be going to Tree Commission on July 20 and committee input will be provided to the Tree Commission at that time. The project is not required to provide sidewalk, but they are interested. Planning and Design Review Committee recognizes that this design needs to implement the multimodal goals of the Wilma Dykeman Master Plan. The comments the commissioners made today will be moved forward to the Tree Commission immediately.

Vice Chair Collins made motion that AARRC vote to approve the project as it does meet the intent and spirit of the guidelines if an effort is made to replace the invasive plants with native noninvasive, and choose a specific color for the retaining wall. Mr. Morasani seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Sprague announced that River Music is tomorrow at 5 pm, and admission and parking are free.

Chair Torno – last Sunday of the month at Salvage Station there will be a Flea for Y'all flea market. Also, the Bywater is doing a craft fair sometime later in the month.

8. ADJOURN

Chair Torno adjourned the meeting at 5:27 p.m. without objection.